

Education

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Linking Learning and Life: A Message from the Minister

Learning can be acquired through a variety of contexts. Students learn in the classroom, but they also learn through work experience, community service, and extracurricular activities. How youth process their learning informs how they develop as individuals and the choices they make in the future. Their learning experiences equip them with knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will shape their future careers and life paths and influence their impact on Manitoba communities.

With the understanding that career development is essential to the social and economic well-being of all citizens, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (MECY) has partnered with the departments of Competitiveness, Training and Trade, Advanced Education and Literacy, Justice, Labour and Immigration, and the Civil Service Commission to introduce the Career Development Initiative (CDI). This initiative is intended to

- help Manitobans develop the knowledge and ability to set and achieve their individual life/work goals
- provide Manitobans with quality resources and supports to make informed education, employment, and training choices
- provide all career stakeholders, industry, learning and training institutions, and government departments with a mechanism to exchange information and work cooperatively

Embedded in the CDI is the acknowledgement that learning is individual and happens in many contexts and in many ways. For further information on career development, visit <www.manitoba.ca/careerdevelopment>.

MECY is helping students make the connection between the knowledge they gain in school and their lives outside of school. Students are being encouraged to explore their career options, plan for their future, and make informed decisions about their journey into work, self-employment, and post-secondary education and training. To assist students and their parents with this planning, School Programs Division has developed *Focus on the Future: Career Planning Begins at Home*. To access this resource, visit <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/cardev/index.html>.

The MB4Youth Division of MECY is working to help youth make education, employment, and life choices that will have a positive impact throughout their learning and working lives. To support students in planning for their future, MB4Youth Division has implemented several career development programs that promote work experience and encourage students to stay in school. These include the Young Entrepreneurs program, CareerFocus, Careers in the Arts, and the career internship programs.

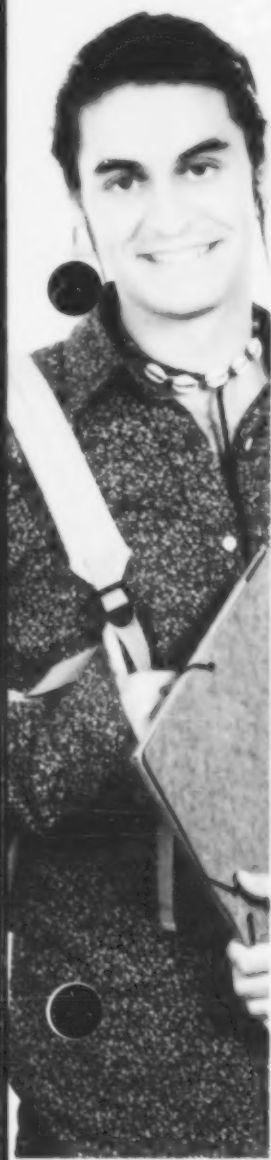
MB4Youth also connects youth to volunteer, leadership, and citizenship programs, providing them with an opportunity to develop valuable employment skills that empower them to network, learn, expand their horizons, and make a difference in their school and community. For further information on MB4Youth programs, services, and leadership initiatives, visit <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/youth/index.html>.

We will continue to seek ways to provide Manitoba youth with opportunities for successful learning, and to support a broad range of learning experiences and resources. These opportunities are essential for Manitoba youth to acquire and understand new information and to achieve their potential, both as productive citizens and as lifelong learners.

Honourable Peter Bjornson
Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth

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• Education

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Conversations about Learning

By Linda Thorlakson

Conversation can be a powerful tool to facilitate change. Talking with others increases understanding and provides opportunities to strengthen plans and initiatives through collaboration. With this in mind, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (MECY) has recently initiated conversations with educational partners focused on improving student learning.

One series of conversations, which focused on how student learning can be improved through the use of assessment data, began with Assistant Deputy Ministers in the Department meeting individually with each superintendent in the province, and inquiring about their use of provincial and/or divisional assessment data to determine and address gaps in student learning. A team of assessment consultants then followed up on these visits, and helped divisions interpret the data and plan ways to enhance assessment processes or address achievement gaps. Some common themes emerged from these visits:

- Many divisions are engaged in some sort of assessment reform, and this has been the case for many years. A common factor among those divisions that have made significant progress in promoting assessment for learning is their ability to sustain focus for a long period of time. These divisions have invested

considerable resources into professional development and into release time for teachers to work and talk together.

- Some divisions are revising and extending the ways they communicate with parents about student learning. New report cards are being piloted and many schools are implementing some form of student-involved conferencing.
- As divisions examine and seek to improve their assessment and communication processes, they are identifying the need for a clearer picture of the essential learning in provincial curricula, as well as for support in fostering more consistent assessment of student learning across the province.

Another important conversation began in the fall of 2008. MECY initiated a round-table discussion with representatives from school divisions across the province about

the connections among curriculum, instruction, and assessment in an outcomes-based learning system. Participants at this round table reinforced the need to clearly identify the essential learning categories in provincial curricula as the focus of instruction, assessment, and communication/reporting.

Student achievement increases when students are aware of—and even participate in formulating—their learning goals and the criteria for success. Their achievement increases further when those goals are the focus of instruction and assessment, and when students are involved in monitoring and communicating their progress toward achieving those goals.

Because these are critical issues facing educators, lots of thoughtful conversations about how to proceed are required and are indeed underway. The opportunities these conversations provide to collaborate and learn from others will help in ongoing efforts to improve student learning.

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Eco-Globe Schools Program Celebrates ESD

By Anne MacDiarmid

The Eco-Globe Schools recognition program is designed to celebrate the education for sustainable development (ESD) initiatives that schools have undertaken this past year, and to facilitate the sharing of ideas and innovative practices. Students are increasingly taking action, speaking out, and working together to build a future of hope.

All Manitoba provincially funded schools may submit an online application by May 15, 2009. In the fall of each school year, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth will recognize Eco-Globe Schools for their ESD initiatives.

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth and Manitoba schools have made ESD a priority. Manitoba students are acquiring knowledge of the interdependency of the three pillars of sustainability: human health and well-being,

environment, and economy. They are also developing values that reflect the importance of continued balance and harmony, and refining the skills required to make equitable decisions and commit to life practices that show personal responsibility for a sustainable future.

For more information on Eco-Globe Schools and other programs, visit the Department's ESD website at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd/, or contact:

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Shine On: A Tap on the Shoulder

By Gerri Zacharias, *The University of Winnipeg*

The Shine On program is the result of a partnership between the Aboriginal Education Directorate of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth and the University of Winnipeg. It is a strategic initiative to broaden the scope of work and to engage the community at large in creating opportunities in the inner city for capacity-building, global learning, cultural enrichment, and creating an environment of shared resources.

The Shine On program is uniquely designed for Aboriginal and inner-city high school students. It focuses on transition as it prepares students for post-secondary learning, builds a sense of belonging in a university campus environment, and helps students to play an active role in their own growth and development. This initiative helps these students build strong relationships with educators and administrators, provides them with access to school-based programming, and encourages them to achieve their academic potential and a post-secondary education.

As part of this program, the University of Winnipeg offered the Eco-Kids and Enviro-Tech programs through the Innovative Learning Centre. Enviro-Tech, which is aimed at high school youth, incorporates traditional

University of Winnipeg's Eco-Kids Camp. This is one of the largest day camp programs in the city aimed at Aboriginal and inner-city children, and it employs 20 University of Winnipeg students as Senior Leaders.

Another component of the Shine On project is making connections with families and community organizations

to build awareness of the educational opportunities that are available, including bursaries/scholarships, employment, and additional access programs. One example of an initiative designed to increase accessibility is the Opportunity Fund. The Opportunity Fund is a comprehensive, three-part program, including fast-track bursaries, micro-financing, and



Shine On participants Shawnee Davis, Kaysha Luce, and Kylie Sato.

"Our Shine On initiative serves to plant the seeds of higher education in the minds of students long before they come to our university. The work of Shine On serves as a tap on the shoulder so that one day they can see themselves as a high school graduate and a university student."

- Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Winnipeg

Aboriginal teachings with environmental science. It taps into students' academic potential by training them in creative problem solving, leadership development, and other techniques to promote academic and personal success.

Through the Shine On initiative, students will have the opportunity to gain full-time summer employment with the University of Winnipeg as high school mentors in the area of community development. As part of their summer employment, the students will work with more than 700 inner-city children who participate every summer in the

tuition credits, that assists children as early as Grade 4 and extends all the way to adult learners. The "earn as you learn" approach is unique for a university in Canada. It is designed to assist Aboriginal children, young people from war-affected nations and refugee populations, and students from inner-city neighbourhoods to obtain financial help and encouragement to be successful in school.

This hands-on approach allows high school students to build confidence, develop a sense of belonging, and make the university campus their own. The program removes the traditional barriers between a university and the surrounding neighbourhood community with the goal of closing the graduation gap.

School ISO Facilitators in Distance Learning

By Marianne Fenn

The Distance Learning Unit (DLU) provides students attending school with Independent Study Option (ISO) courses that offer flexibility in scheduling and the ability to complete courses that would otherwise be unavailable to them. There are 73 compulsory and elective Grades 7 to 12 ISO courses in English, and 19 available in French.

Schools have designated ISO Facilitators to provide an important link between DLU and schools in Manitoba. The ISO Facilitator acts as a liaison between the student, the school, and DLU. Typical responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that students applying for an ISO course have the approval of the school principal/facilitator, and that the student has properly completed the ISO application.
- Ensuring that students have access to all related/required supplies (e.g., textbooks, videotapes).
- Meeting with students regularly to monitor progress.
- Submitting any assignments, tests, projects, or essays on behalf of the students and then returning them to the students when received from the ISO office.
- Ensuring that parent(s)/legal guardian(s) are aware of student progress.
- Assisting students in resolving any difficulties they may encounter during the completion of an ISO course, and providing them with encouragement to meet assignment deadlines and to complete the coursework on time.

When ISO Facilitators were asked how students at their schools benefit from taking ISO courses, responses included the following:

It is an effective alternative for students who benefit from the flexibility that ISO provides, such as timelines, course availability, and selection.

They are allowed to pick up credits that will allow them to graduate or to "catch up."



Students benefit because of the flexibility of the program, availability of well written courses, the chance to graduate, and the reasonable cost.

ISO courses have reassured students that they are independent learners.

In October 2008, DLU held its first ISO Facilitator Workshop. During this professional learning day, participants had the opportunity to learn about the distance learning program, the development of new courses, and the supports that DLU has in place for schools and ISO Facilitators. The DLU website now includes a section for ISO Facilitators at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/schoolfacilitator/index.html.

The afternoon session focused on best-practice presentations from four current ISO Facilitators, and they shared their strategies for providing support to students enrolled in ISO courses at their schools.

Guidance counsellors from Stonewall Collegiate and Pinawa Collegiate shared some forms and templates they created for tracking student progress and providing support to students enrolled in ISO courses.

School librarians from Rivers Collegiate and Sanford Collegiate, who work as ISO Facilitators in their schools, delivered presentations that included suggestions on textbook and resource tracking for ISO students.

Feedback from the workshop was overwhelmingly positive, with many of the ISO Facilitators asking for this type of workshop to be conducted annually. This would give them the opportunity to continue to

learn from each other, and to help each other by sharing ideas and strategies that work.

The support that ISO Facilitators provide to students and parents has become increasingly valuable as the number of students that use ISO courses rises. Effective coordination of programming among the home, school, and DLU helps students receive the credits they need and achieve learning success.

For more information about ISO Facilitators or distance learning options in Manitoba, contact:

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Update on National and International Assessment

By Ken Clark

This month, approximately 100 Manitoba schools, along with thousands of other schools across Canada and around the world, are participating in the fourth administration of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

This initiative of the Organization for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD) provides an opportunity for nations and, in the case of Canada, provinces to view their educational programs in relation to those of other jurisdictions. This comparison is based on performance measures and contextual factors of 15-year-olds (as of January 1 of the year of administration). PISA 2009 is focusing on reading, with mathematics and science present as minor areas of study (less topic coverage, smaller student samples, no contextual information gathered). First reports of results for PISA 2009 will likely be published near the end of 2010.

Results from PISA 2006, with science as the main domain, were released in December of 2007. In that study, Canadian and Manitoba students, on average, performed above the OECD mean in science. Manitoba ranked sixth among Canadian jurisdictions and Canada was one of the top-ranked nations. PISA results are very influential in some nations. For example, Iceland and Denmark re-evaluated their educational systems due to PISA results that were lower than expected, and Finland regularly hosts guests from other countries interested in discovering factors associated with their high PISA results. Reports for all PISA studies (2000, 2003, and 2006) are available on the CMEC website at www.cmec.ca/pisa/indexe.stm.

In March of 2007, first results were released for the other large-scale assessment in which Manitoba participates: the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP), which is conducted by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). PCAP, like PISA, is administered once every three years and assesses reading, mathematics, and science, with one domain at a time being the major focus of study. PCAP targets students who are 13 years old at the beginning of the school year. PCAP 2007 focused on reading. The first report of results is available on the CMEC website at www.cmec.ca/pcap/indexe.stm. In PCAP 2007, Manitoba students' average reading score ranked fifth among Canadian jurisdictions. A separate report regarding contextual factors and how they relate to performance is pending. This report will address a range of classroom-, school-, and student-specific factors such as course timetabling, teaching strategies, and students' beliefs and attitudes. Upon release of the contextual report, a discussion group will be struck to study the results to arrive at interpretations specific to Manitoba.

Looking ahead, there will be a national scoring session for PISA 2009 this July in the National Capital region, with two or three teachers from Manitoba participating. The next administrations of these two assessments will be 2010 for PCAP (focus on mathematics) and 2012 for PISA (also focusing on mathematics). In the meantime, there likely will be limited pilots for PISA and PCAP in preparation for upcoming assessments.

There are a number of other large-scale assessments in which some Canadian provinces participate and that Department staff are evaluating. These include the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). PIRLS is an assessment of the reading skills of Grade 4 students administered on a five-year cycle (2001, 2006, 2011). TIMSS is an assessment of science and mathematics skills of Grade 4 and Grade 8 students administered every four years (1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011).

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THE ENGAGED Learner

Support Materials

In October 2008, the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents and Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth sponsored the Engaged Learner conference in order to identify effective strategies to improve student engagement.

At this conference, four approaches to the issue of student engagement were identified:

- Teaching and Learning
- Rethinking Schools
- Relationships
- Social Responsibility

As a follow-up, information on the conference topics and themes, selected presentations, and other teacher support materials are available at

<www.theengagedlearner.ca>.

New Grades 3 and 4 Reading and Numeracy Assessment

By Sara MacPherson

With the release of the new *Kindergarten to Grade 8 Mathematics: Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes*, there will be a new look to the Grade 3/4 Assessment in Reading and Numeracy in fall 2009.

The assessment provides teachers, parents, and divisional administrators with information about students' foundation knowledge and skills in reading and numeracy.

The revised numeracy assessment focuses on two main concepts in the mathematics curriculum: algebraic reasoning and number sense. The reading competencies have also been revised to more closely align with the Middle Years Assessment.

Thirty-nine schools piloted the revised policy, competencies, and individual student data collection system in the fall of 2008. Numeracy and Reading Review Committees composed of teacher representatives from pilot schools have worked with Department personnel to further revise and refine the competencies and assessment criteria, based on feedback received from teachers and parents.

An individual student data collection system is being tested and finalized for fall 2009 implementation. The system, which is similar to one currently used for the Middle Years Assessment, is a web application that will be used by schools to record and submit individual student results. It will also link Manitoba's Early and Middle Years data with data that Healthy Child Manitoba collects through the Early Development Instrument (EDI). This will allow schools to gather more information and to better track students' progress.

Professional learning opportunities will be offered throughout the 2009/2010 school year for teachers implementing the revised Grade 3/4 Assessment policy, and for divisional personnel who support teachers during the assessment process.

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Transition Planning for Students with Exceptional Needs

By Brent Epp

In consultation with educational and community partners, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth led an interdepartmental committee in the revision of the Healthy Child Manitoba protocol. This initiative involved representatives from Healthy Child Manitoba, Family Services and Housing, Health, and Healthy Living, and resulted in the document *Bridging to Adulthood: A Protocol for Transitioning Students with Exceptional Needs from School to Community* (March 2008).

The protocol describes how transition planning partners will work together to support students who, after leaving school, require supports from the provincial government, its agencies, and/or regional health authorities. The transition planning process includes school programming that focuses on career development and early involvement of available adult supports to help young people to successfully contribute to the economic, social, and cultural life of Manitoba.

Fifteen regional overview/implementation sessions were held in the fall of 2008. Over 400 partners participated, including teachers, administrators, community workers, regional health authority representatives, service providers, and parents. The

sessions included presentations about individual transition planning, regional programs, and services provided by the Department of Family Services and Housing and regional health authorities, as well as a presentation on person-centred planning from Community Living Manitoba.

Transition information evenings for parents, which were led by Community Living Manitoba, followed the rural

and northern daytime sessions.

Bridging to Adulthood: A Protocol for Transitioning Students with Exceptional Needs from School to Community can be accessed at the Department website at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/transition/index.html.

For information about implementation of the protocol or transition planning for students with exceptional needs, contact:

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The Arts, Literacy, and Curriculum

By Dr. Francine Morin

Since completing my doctoral dissertation, which explored the role of professional development in planned educational change in arts education, I have been researching curriculum transformation. This study has introduced me to a rich and exciting body of theory and research encompassing ideas about the change process and factors that influence change in curriculum contexts, particularly the role of teachers and leaders.

Woven through my research program on curriculum transformation are investigative themes targeting the implementation of new or different curricula, essential professional learning conditions supporting change, professional content knowledge construction, factors affecting curriculum transformation, and the documentation of professional learning and curriculum transformation.

Findings from various studies I have conducted have shown that some of the most critical conditions for professional learning and curriculum transformation include:

- An intensive sequence of professional learning experiences that move from the comprehension of new curriculum reforms to the development, application, and evaluation of implementation action plans
- A direct connection to school contexts
- A focus on needs of leaders, teachers, and learners
- Strategies for sustaining professional learning communities (e.g., reflection, collaboration, problem solving, dialogue, study groups)
- Ongoing support and feedback on-site (e.g., change leaders, mentors, support teachers)
- Targeted follow-up workshops and impact sessions

Dr. Wayne Serebrin, Professor Liz Coffman, and I recently conducted a study involving an innovative teacher education program for K-4 pre-service educators in a local school. We explored changing views of literacy education theory and practice, and how these changes relate to curriculum renewal and reform in literacy and arts education.

Several interesting findings emerged from these experiences. The arts are important forms of literacy that need to be included, along with language, in a broader and more interconnected approach to literacy education for young children. The use of integrated

literacy experiences and multimodal texts support children's meaning-making. There is a reciprocal relationship between the interpretive and creative processes in children's arts and literacy learning. Literacy learning might best be approached as a shared and collaborative venture between classroom generalists and arts specialists. More flexible and extended instructional periods are needed to support children's multimodal literacy learning.

A large-scale professional learning initiative was launched with a ministerial-funded research project I recently conducted. The forthcoming report, *Study of Arts Education in Manitoba Schools 2006-2007: Final Report of Aggregate Results*, provides rich, critical data aimed at increasing our understanding of many aspects of teaching, learning, and leading the arts in our schools at all levels.

I have also been intimately involved in the Department's curriculum renewal work in arts education, which was launched with a philosophical inquiry that served to guide the creation of four new framework documents for early education: one in each of dance, drama, music, and visual arts. These progressive curricula align beautifully with 21st century calls for reform in both literacy and arts learning, including an emphasis on a broad spectrum of arts learning experiences, learner-directed inquiry, creative problem solving, integration, social interaction, and a constructivist approach to teaching and learning.

Given the prominence of more traditional, discipline-based, and direct teaching approaches to the arts in many of our schools, embracing new arts curriculum reforms may present some challenges for the field. My research concurs with that of others in that it suggests that the most direct and promising route to implementing the Department's new vision for arts education is through effective professional learning opportunities for teachers and leaders, the key agents of curriculum implementation and change.

profile

Dr. Francine Morin is Professor and Head of the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the University of Manitoba. She teaches in the areas of Early and Middle Years arts education and action research methodology. Her research interests include: arts education and integration, multiple forms of literacy, professional learning, and curriculum transformation.



Exploring Entrepreneurship through Education

By Shaun Hampton

The world of work has changed. Today, young people have the opportunity to engage in a variety of different kinds of employment. Entrepreneurship and self-employment are recognized as viable career options that provide youth with the opportunity to be innovative and gain diverse, transferable skills.

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (MECY) supports many programs that recognize the valuable contributions that entrepreneurs bring to communities, and encourages young people to explore entrepreneurship and self-employment when thinking about their future career paths.

The MB4Youth Division of MECY is actively involved in supporting business development and educating youth about entrepreneurship through programming and initiatives that connect clients to resources in and outside of government. Programs such as the Young Entrepreneurs Business Support Grant and the Skill Development Grant provide financial supports to Manitoba youth, and connect them to

resources that assist in business development and planning. MB4Youth also supports the Canadian Youth Business Foundation, which provides financial and mentor support to new businesses, and Junior Achievement of Manitoba, which educates students on entrepreneurship and career

planning. In addition, the business plan competition for Grades 11 and 12 students held in Winnipeg and Brandon is also facilitated through MB4Youth.

Bringing business education into the classroom is a priority for MECY. It is important that youth are given the chance to experience entrepreneurship first-hand so they become aware of the potential opportunities it provides. In January 2009, a group of Grade 6 students at École St. Germain of the Louis Riel School Division had the opportunity to run a business, culminating in a one-day sales event. Students identified a business, created and facilitated a market research survey, developed a marketing campaign, maintained accurate financial records, organized student-led teams, and explored the benefits of good customer service and quality control. Through this first-hand experience, they had the opportunity to be innovative, to work as a team, and to earn money towards a charity of their choice.

Providing youth with these opportunities to explore entrepreneurship and self-employment is essential to ensuring they are making informed decisions about their future career paths. Through programs and services delivered and supported by the Department, business development can be explored and innovative ideas can become realities.

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The newsletter includes articles from the education community and from Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. Signed articles appearing in this magazine express the views of their authors and not necessarily those of the Department.

Distribution:

Education Manitoba is distributed free to schools in Manitoba. This newsletter can be viewed online at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/newsletter/>

A similar document has been developed by the Bureau de l'éducation française Division for the Français and the French Immersion Programs.

Contact Information:

We invite contributions to *Education Manitoba*. When forwarding submissions, please include your name and telephone number, and send materials in print and electronic formats to:

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